

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMCONSUL RECIFE

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BRASILIA PASS AID FOR CAMPBELL

E. O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: BENC, BR
SUBJ: MAJOR PROJECT: SUGAR ALCOHOL CONVERSION

REF.: A) WELLS/SANDS TELECON 2/10/76
B) SECSTATE 35871

1. SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY MENTIONED REF TELECON CONCERNS REQUEST OF SUGAR MILL EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURER (MECANICA PESADA CONTINENTAL IN MACEIO, ALAGOAS) FOR ASSISTANCE IN SETTING UP ADDITIONAL TOOLING TO PRODUCE DISTILLING EQUIPMENT FOR PRODUCTION OF ALCOHOL FROM SUGAR CANE. THE KEY EQUIPMENT MECANICA PESADA WISHES TO PRODUCE IS THE DISTILLATION COLUMN REQUIRED FOR FERMENTATION OF EITHER THE CANE JUICE (IF ALCOHOL IS TO BE MADE DIRECTLY FROM SUGAR CANE), OR MOLASSES (IF ALCOHOL IS TO BE PRODUCED AS A BYPRODUCT OF SUGAR REFINING). PROJECTED CAPACITIES OF THESE DISTILLATION COLUMNS WOULD BE ABOUT 60,000 LITERS/DAY FOR ETHYL ALCOHOL TO BE MADE FROM MOLASSES. (NO PROJECTION WAS GIVEN FOR THE DIRECT PROCESS METHOD.)

2. BECAUSE OF THE STIMULUS GIVEN BY THE GOB FOR THE PRODUCTION OF ANHYDROUS ALCOHOL TO BE MIXED WITH AUTOMOTIVE FUEL (GOAL IS TO PRODUCE 4 BILLION LITERS BY 1980 WHICH COULD SUBSTITUTE FOR 20 PERCENT OF THE GASOLINE TO BE CONSUMED THAT YEAR), THERE
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HAS BEEN A SURGE OF DEMAND FOR EQUIPMENT FOR ALCOHOL PLANTS.

ACCORDING TO MECANICA PESADA THERE ARE AT THE MOST TWO COMPANIES IN THE COUNTRY THAT CAN PRODUCE THE NECESSARY EQUIPMENT. WHAT MECANICA PESADA APPEARS TO NEED IS A PACKAGE DEAL INVOLVING A) CHEMICAL ENGINEERING TO REVIEW AND STREAMLINE THE PROCESS, B) MECHANICAL ENGINEERING TO DESIGN THE TOOLING AND C) PURCHASE OF MACHINERY TO MAKE THE EQUIPMENT. NEEDLESS TO SAY, FIRM IS IN A BIG HURRY. AMCONSUL RECIFE IS INITIATING WTDR ON COMPANY.

3. COMMENT: QUITE APART FROM THIS SPECIFIC OPPORTUNITY, COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR HAS MEETING LATER THIS WEEK WITH SUGAR AND ALCOHOL INSTITUTE TO ASSESS COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR U.S. COMPANIES UNDER NATIONAL ALCOHOL PROGRAM. CONCEPT OF GROWING SUGAR FOR FUEL MAY SEEM "FAR-OUT" AND IS CURRENTLY THE SUBJECT OF CONTROVERSIAL ARTICLES IN THE PRESS. "FAR-OUT" OR NOT, HOWEVER, THE GOB IS FIRMLY BEHIND THE PROGRAM IN ORDER TO SAVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE NOW SPENT ON PETROLEUM IMPORTS. DEXTER

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